

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

June 4, 2003

Re: Douglas S. Belt Cases

Director Larry Welch issued an apology this week to the victims and families of crimes allegedly committed by Douglas S. Belt for a 1991 error by the KBI.

The inadvertent mistake apparently occurred during the processing by the KBI of a piece of evidence in October 1991. While it is somewhat difficult to determine exactly what happened 12 years ago, the error appears to have been caused when a blood sample taken in one of the investigations of several rapes was mistakenly marked as being Mr. Belt's during processing at the KBI laboratory. As a result, this error may have contributed to a significant delay in identifying Mr. Belt as a suspect in those cases. It should be noted that Mr. Belt has not been convicted and is presumed innocent of all the charges at this time.

"The tragic result of this simple mistake is that the investigation in a number of rape cases moved away from Mr. Belt. The even more terrible consequences are the later, additional crimes that Mr. Belt has been charged with committing," said Director Welch. "The review has shown that this was simply a case of human error. Even the best people aren't perfect."

Procedural safeguards will be further enhanced this summer with the implementation of an automated Laboratory Information Management system, which uses bar codes on all evidence.

Director Welch will be available at a news conference at KBI headquarters in Topeka, tomorrow, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003 at 12:00 noon.

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